

Suggestions for Erecting Jail-Work-houses for Convicted Felons, and Hospitals for the Poor, and other Indigent Debtors in every County: Humbly submitted to the Consideration of both Houses of Parliament: And Printed by the direction of his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury.

THE following Suggestions may be easily reduced by the Wisdom and Authority of the Parliament to such Order as may greatly advance the Reputation as well as the Benefit of the Nation, and whoever useth their Interest for promoting thereof, will do a Work acceptable both to God and Man; for it would mightily curb the Vices of Swearing, Sabbath-breaking, and Drunkenness, &c. from which Fountains the other Capital Offences have their rise. It would likewise lessen the number of such great Offenders as deserve Death, who by a long continuance in Vice and Immorality have lost all Fear of God, and so extinguished all Belief of a future State, that they are not only fit for any Villany, but likewise undervalue the highest Punishment that the Law can inflict: Thinking that all sorrow as well as Joy is ended by a few Minutes pain in Death. But if the punishment of Hard Labour were put upon them, together with an indelible Mark of their Roguery upon their Faces, it would be a much greater Terror to them and others that may be tempted to the like Crimes. It would also be a great Relief to the Poor; for such who design to employ them, will know where to find them, and how to come by their Goods again: And further, the advantage thereof would be great for poor starving Debtors; for such poor starvelings are commonly in for small sums, who by this Method may be enabled not only to subsist themselves, but also to make a partial if not total satisfaction to their Creditors. In short, it hath a tendency to restrain Vice in general, to promote Vertue and Trade more than ever; Mens Houses will then be more secure from Thieves, their Bodies from the Swords of bloody Bravoes, their Money from High-way Men and Pick-pockets, and the Souls of many poor Offenders unfit for Death bettered, and made penitent by such milder and yet not cruel punishments; the Counties will be eased of making good the Losses of Travellers by Robberies, and at last of maintaining Watches upon the Road, and in process of time the Parishes will be relieved from that great Charge they are exposed unto in maintaining the Poor in an Idle Life. And, to conclude, the Honour of our Countrey will thereby be advanced, which is mightily Eclipsed by the great Number of Beggars and Vagabonds, that frequent our Streets and High-ways, cheating and thieving when they have an Opportunity. To Effect which, it is suggested,

I. That Laws already made against Swearing and the like Vices be duely put in Execution, and that such New Laws as shall be found necessary for the better suppression of Vice be made.

II. That the Forfeitures for such Offences, be applyed to support the Charge of Jail and Hospital Work-houses: This will have a double Effect, for it will not only diminish the number of Felons and idle Vagabonds, and employ the poor, but it will lessen the Number of Swearers, Sabbath-breakers, and such like Offenders; for from those two Fountains, viz. the Atheism that such Vices lead mens minds to, and the Poverty that others fall under, all capital Offences have their Source as is abovesaid.

III. That it may be lawfull for the King to Exchange the Punishment of Death, when he thinks fit, except in Cases of Murther, for a constant Bondage and Servitude in such Work-houses.

IV. That Two Pence per Pound for One year, of the yearly Rent of all the Lands in England, be advanced, to build or purchase Jail-Hospitals and Work-houses for Convicts, and the Poor in every County: Some are of Opinion that a voluntary Contribution will be better than such a Tax; but the Author hereof fears it will not be so certain, nor so soon collected; and therefore thinks since the Benefit is general, it will not be thought grievous to the Subject, to advance for once in this manner, or any other way that the Wisdom of the Parliament shall think fit.

V. That the Fellons that shall be put into these Work-houses, may have the Initial Letters of their Name, Sir-Name, Crime and County, put upon their Faces, with Gun-powder, or some such indelible Mark, that thereby they may be known in Case they escape.

It is objected, That a Mark with Gun-powder is impracticable without great pain. *Ans.* Pain is a Punishment they have deserved: And yet some say it may be done without any pain, by other Tinging Preparations. Others object, That such an indelible Mark will expose Persons to a continual Contempt, if it should be thought fit to set them at Liberty upon Extraordinary Signs of Repentance and Reformation. It may be answered, That few pardoned Convicts have followed a virtuous Course of Life, their Brand upon the Hand being generally an Earnest of the succeeding Halter. But all is to be submitted to the Wisdom of the Parliament.

VI. That no Wages, but bare and ordinary Food be allowed to Fellons and Idle Vagabonds, but that some small matter more be allowed to the poor if they can Earn it.

VII. That Incouragement be given to such substantial Tradesmen and others who shall be found willing to employ those Creatures, to Incorporate all over *England*; or in every County by themselves; for the better managing such Work-houses.

VIII. That the Overseers of such Hospitals have Power to punish with Whip and Pump, if the Prisoners refuse to work; and to inflict something yet more severe, if they wilfully spoil their Work.

IX. That the Overseers have Power to Let out the Fellons to Day-labour in Chains, if they have not Work for them within doors, to draw in Carts, Mills, to turn Wheels, mend High-ways, cleanse Streets, dig in Coal-pits and other Mines; and if Artificers, to such Masters of Handy-crafts as will hire them at a certain rate *per diem* to be paid to the Hospital.

X. That the Law for the whole Scheme be Temporary, till it be known whether the desired Effect can be attained by it.

Some object against the whole as a Project that will not be able to defray its own Charge Annually.

Ans. Then other Methods for defraying the Charge must be thought of, for some time, till the Prisoners own Labour can produce it, rather than the publick Good should be neglected. But if the Forfeitures for the smaller Offences first mentioned be duely collected, they will not only fully defray the maintenaunce of such as are in the Hospitals, if by their own Labour it cannot be done, but will also prove a Fund to encourage the taking of Highway-men, and other Thieves; and thus Vices become Instrumental mutually to destroy one another.

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